

News Release

Farmers' Markets Benefit from Service-learning Project by Students in Integrated Marketing Communication Class at the U of M, Crookston

By Itolleks on Wednesday, December 14, 2011

For one class at the University of Minnesota, Crookston, the end of the semester meant sharing ideas to help strengthen and promote local farmers markets. Students in Rachel Lundbohm's integrated marketing communication class were involved in a service-learning project to help farmers markets in northwest Minnesota. Service learning combines academic classroom curriculum with meaningful community service, and the purpose of the project was to conduct research on farmers' markets, suggest ways to increase awareness, and devise options for helping to build the customer base.



Research results identified target markets and their characteristics including the demographics and psychographics of each. Students developed marketing slogans, logo suggestions, a methodology for advertising, and included a marketing budget. Recommendations were made ranging from sales promotions to reaching consumers through print, radio and other media. The students also addressed the use of social media as a marketing tool. In order to determine the effectiveness of the marketing, students suggested possible assessment tools to learn more about market customers.

The research project was the result of Lundbohm, who also serves as the associate director of the Center for Rural Entrepreneurial Studies (CRES), connecting a need identified through the Northwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnership (NWRSDP) with students in the integrated marketing communication course.

The markets and member vendors collaborated in seeking assistance in market promotion. During the second week of the semester, students met with representatives of farmers markets and Linda Kingery, executive director of the NWRSDP to learn more about the marketing challenges these farmers markets face. The NWRSDP works to sustain Minnesota's natural resource-based communities and industries by addressing community-identified agriculture, natural resources, and tourism issues in partnership with the University of Minnesota.

Joining Kingery for the presentations were Sarah Reese coordinator for Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) for Polk County; Chuck and Barb Schulstad, vendors at the Mentor Farmers' Market; Lisa Loegering, assistant director of service learning at the U of M, Crookston; and Kim Turner from the White Earth Community Farmers' Market.

Kingery was impressed with the marketing ideas the students presented. "The connection of Rachel Lundbohm to both CRES and the teaching of this class were a perfect combination for us," Kingery says. "The students learned practical application of what they were taught in the class by applying it directly to promoting farmers markets in this region. We gained a lot of fresh, valuable ideas through their work and what also is exciting is that many of these ideas can be easily implemented."

In February a compiled marketing plan will be presented to farmers markets in the region and a spring semester class will continue with a similar approach in a retail and merchandising management course.

The seventeen students in the class included Yu Cheng, a senior agricultural business major from Hangzhou, China; Kate Holmquist, a junior communication major from Middleton, Wis.; Jean-Michel Habeck, a senior marketing major from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada; Josh Koch, s senior double major in marketing and manufacturing management from Cedar, Minn.; Joann Blom, a senior marketing major from Thief River Falls, Minn.; Melissa Blawat, a senior agricultural business major from Viking, Minn.; Jie Yang, a senior agricultural business major from Shaozing, China; Steph Thomas, a senior double major in business and marketing from St. Albert, Alberta, Canada; Yuan Ding, a senior agricultural business major from Hangzhou, China; Scott Steuck, a junior communication major from Dassel, Minn.; David Anderson, a junior business management major from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada; Tyler Roed, a sophomore sport and recreation management major from Devils, Lake, N.D.; Eric Fisher, a senior business major from Hartland, Wis.; Mike Boebel, a sophomore sport and recreation management major from Deerfield, Wis.; Amoy Carty, a senior hotel, restaurant and tourism management major from Sandy Point, St.Kitts& Nevis; and Xi Zhou, a senior business management major from Chong Sing, China; and Vaughn Loomis, a senior business management major from Walker, Minn.

Through the University of Minnesota, Crookston, CRES is a grant funded organization that assists entrepreneurs in Northwestern Minnesota with the development and creation of their entrepreneurial enterprise. CRES serves eleven counties including Beltrami, Clearwater, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake and Roseau. CRES is located in Dowell Hall 117. For information, call 218-281-8595 (cres@tc.umn.edu), or visit www.umccres.org.

Today the University of Minnesota, Crookston delivers 26 bachelor's degree programs, 18 minors, and 36 concentrations, including 10 online degrees, in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of 1,600 undergraduates from 25 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.

In the photo, back row (l to r): LisaLoegering, Vaughn Loomis, Mike Boebel, Eric Fisher, Scott Steuck, Joann Blom (infront of Steuck);Tyler Roed, David Anderson, Jie Yang

Middle row: Rachel Lundbohm, StephanieThomas, Josh Koch; Amoy Carty, Yu Cheng, Yuan Ding, Melissa Blawat, Xi Zhou.

Seated: Courtney Bergman, Linda Kingery, Chuck Schulstad, Barb Schulstad, andSarah Reese.

Not pictured: Kate Holmquist and Jean-Michel Habeck

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